

#### **3.5.4.4. Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)**

Any significant stream or river in a county under the jurisdiction of the N.C. Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) may be considered Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) unless otherwise documented by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries (NOAA-Fisheries). During agency review of the proposed project, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) makes the initial determination of whether or not a proposed project "may adversely affect" EFH. This determination by the USACE is submitted to NOAA-Fisheries for their review and comment. NOAA-Fisheries will then determine if additional consultation is necessary regarding the proposed project or if they concur with the USACE's decision. NOAA-Fisheries advises using the Draft List of Essential Fish Habitat Species by Waterbody in North Carolina (NOAA-Fisheries 2009) to determine those species subject to review in a given project study area. No streams or wetlands within the project study area are tidal in nature nor have been identified as a waterbody containing EFH (NOAA-Fisheries 2009).

#### **3.5.4.5. N.C. Coastal Area Management Act Areas of Environmental Concern**

Areas of Environmental Concern (AEC) are the foundation of the Coastal Resources Commission's (CRC) permitting program for coastal development. An AEC is an area of natural importance. It may have environmental, social, economic or aesthetic values that make it valuable to the State. The CRC classifies areas as AECs to protect them from uncontrolled development, which may cause irreversible damage to property, public health or the environment. AECs cover almost all coastal waters and about three percent of the land in the 20 coastal counties. Craven and Carteret Counties are counties covered by the Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA).

There are no AEC within the project study area; however, since this project is expected to result in fill in wetlands, NCDOT will be required to submit a Consistency Certification document to the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management demonstrating how the proposed project would be considered consistent with the State's coastal management program.